



**Women's  
Wellbeing  
Summit**

# **GILL THACKRAY**

**WRITING FOR RESILIENCE & WELLBEING**

# Writing for Wellbeing & Resilience



# The evidence

- 1986 James Pennebaker & Sandra Beall's influential study found writing about trauma positively affects physical health
- Over 1500 research papers later...
- 2001 Laura King - what if we write about positivity instead of trauma? Similar benefits to writing about trauma
- Penn Uni - gratitude journalling (spoiler if it came naturally we wouldn't need to journal)
- Writing works - research demonstrates writing offers benefits that span physical & mental wellbeing, life satisfaction, resilience, motivation, self awareness, post surgery recovery, pain management....

Do you need to be born a  
great writer?



# Before we begin...

**There's no  
pressure to  
share unless  
you want to**

Look after yourself  
& work within  
your window of  
tolerance. If you  
need to stop &  
take a break it's  
okay

Don't judge what  
you write.  
Silence your  
inner critic.

Forget about spelling  
& grammar

There's no right way  
of doing this

Trust the process -  
if you feel a bit  
cynical it's okay

# Increasing Positive Emotions (being your own cheerleader)

Ask yourself what kind words do I need to hear right now?

Sentence stems

- Today I need...
- So I say to myself...
- Today I feel...
- So I say to myself...
- Today I think...
- So I say to myself...





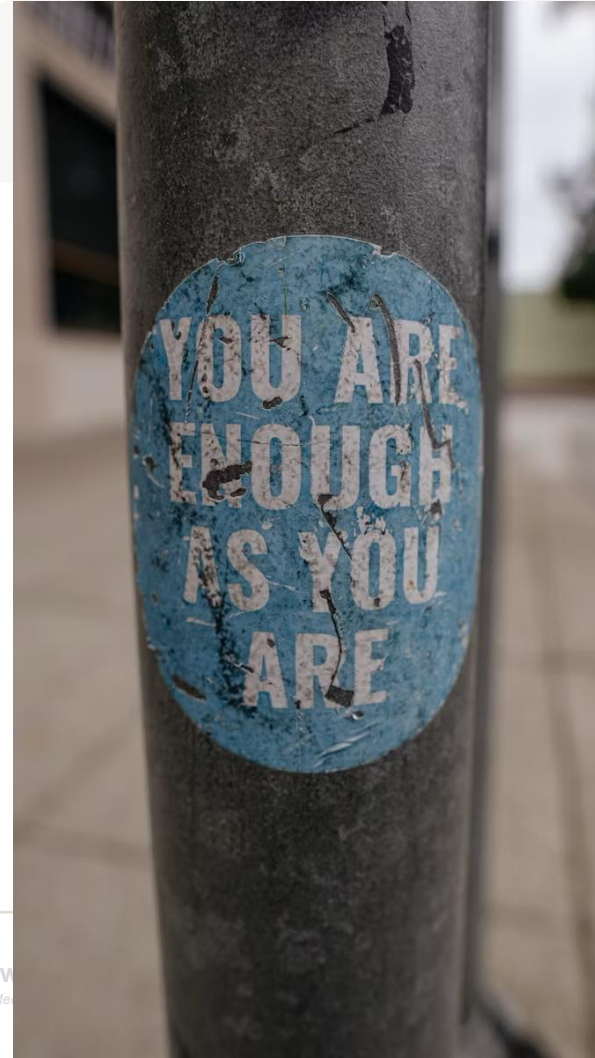
# Congratulations!



# Fostering Positive Emotions

## - the happy memory bank

- One good thing that happened recently was...
  - A time I felt awe was...
  - I felt connected when...
  - A positive moment in my day was..
  - what made it enjoyable was...
- ... And savour



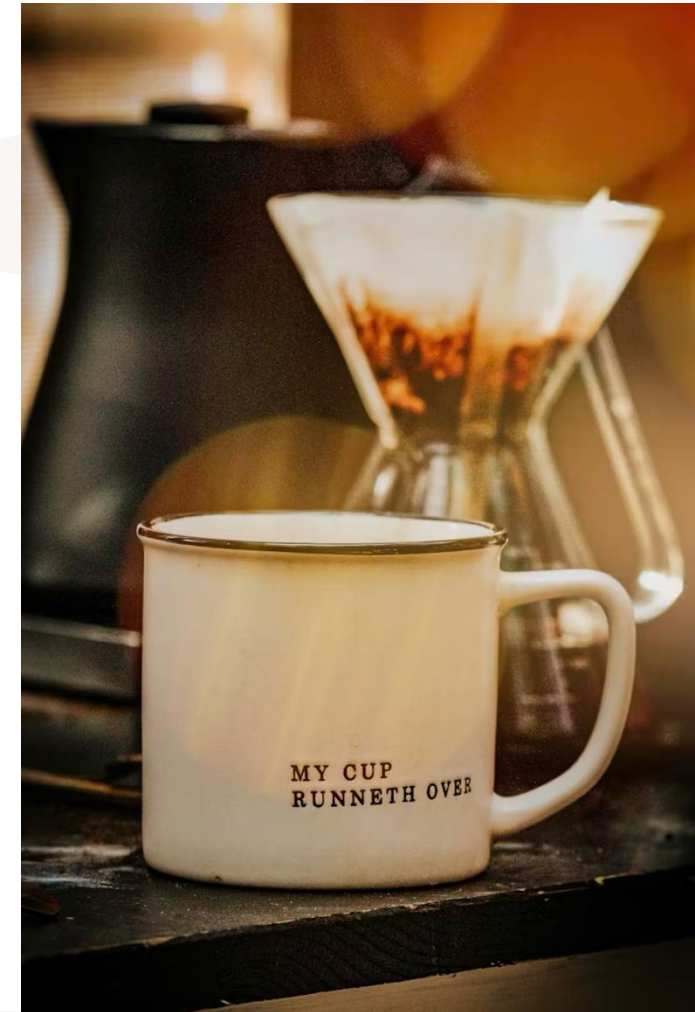


# GRATITUDE JOURNALLING

- Gratitude journals are a way to **keep track of the positive and good things** in your life
- A gratitude journal helps you **slow down, reflect** on & **savour** the good things in your life.
- Penn Uni researcher Martin Seligman found it increased happiness, reduced depression & even enhanced sleep quality. One study found journalling for one week led to sustained increase in happiness for six months
- Create your own - Self-love journal, self-esteem journal

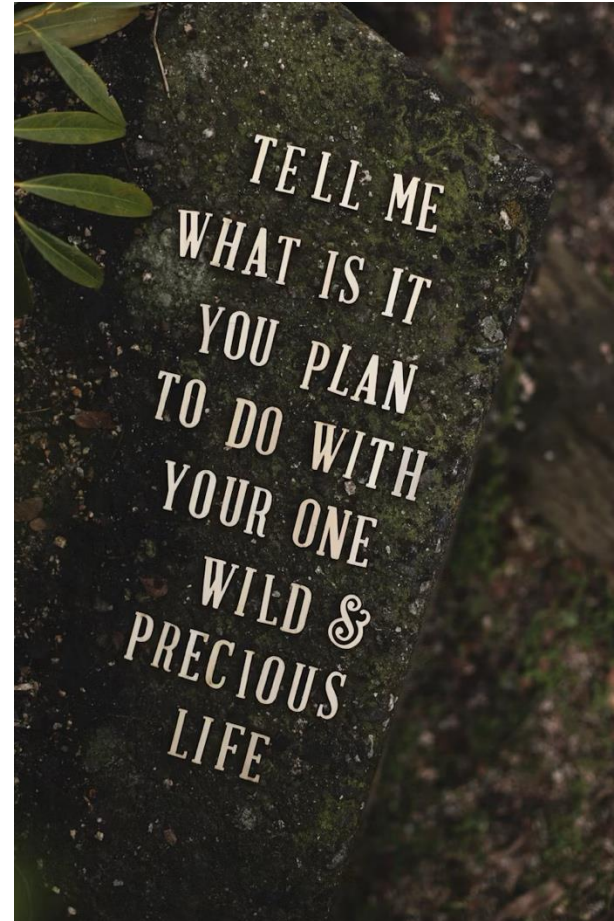
# Gratitude Journal

- Three things I'm grateful for...
- One thing I'm learning from my challenges...
- One person I'm grateful for...
- The best part of my day so far is...

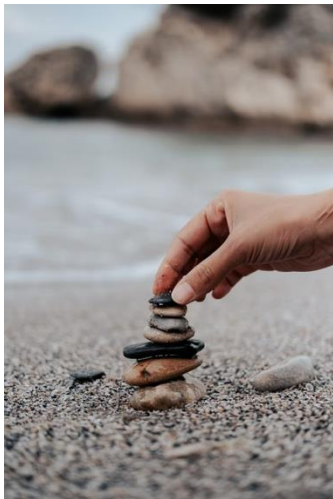


# The Summer Day by Mary Oliver

'Tell me, what is it you plan to  
do  
With your one wild and  
Precious life?'



# Choose one of the images



**Reflect on the image you've chosen. Why does it resonate? What interests you about it? How might it link to the theme of wellness? Write freely about it.**